

SEPARATION OR INTEGRATION: ON EVOLUTION OF THE SPATIAL MODEL OF THE MULTINATIONAL CITY

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Abstract

The traditional model of the multinational city, which was based on the harmonious coexistence of separated ethnic residential districts and common multinational public areas, where the exchange of services and goods took place, gives way to the contemporary model, based on the principles of dispersion and segmentation. In the postmodern city virtual space has increasingly becoming a platform of exchange: numerous economic, social and cultural functions are performed through the ubiquitous electronic communications.

Public space, symbolic for the European concept of the city, is losing many of its previous functions in favour of the Internet. The dispersion of immigrants in the structure of the multinational city is conducive to the emergence of an attractive, kaleidoscopic and multicultural urban organism, their separation in ethnic ghettos results in intensification of pathologies.

Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century is a time that sees the largest human migration in the history of the world. According to data gathered by the UN in 2013, as many as 232 million people, over 3% of the overall population on our planet, do not live in their countries of birth. The huge number of voluntary migrants should be increased by over 46 million refugees, people who have been forced to leave their homes in the wake of wars, ethnic cleansings, famine or natural disasters (Krzemiński 2015, p. 56).

The lack of economic balance and the forces of globalisation, with the principles of the free market in particular, ensure the freedom of movement of people, capital, goods and services, as well as causing the migration processes to increase. The mighty of this world, the great entrepreneurs and prominent artists, can freely choose their homeland, they are heartily welcomed everywhere. The largest category of migrants consists of people who have decided to change their place of residence in search of work and a better life: starting from professionals and managers, ending with unskilled workers and domestic help. There are already cities where migrants constitute a majority of the population. As much as 82% of the population of Dubai was born abroad, followed by the cities of Miami - 51%, and Amsterdam - 47% (Elsheshtawy 2010, p. 212). The most problematic category of migrants, which poses the biggest moral dilemmas,

include refugees. Crowds of poor people from conflict areas in the Middle East and Africa storm into Europe, and in order to stop them, border fences have been put up.

It is worth noting that in the past, it was the borderlands that were multinational, whereas the capitals of empires were ethnically homogeneous; today, in the era of post-modernity, the provinces are usually uniform in terms of nationality, while large metropolises constitute collections of numerous communities with varied national and ethnic backgrounds. Consequently, national and cultural homogeneity has become characteristically provincial, while multiculturalism and multinationalism have come to be typically metropolitan feature.

Traditional model of a multinational city

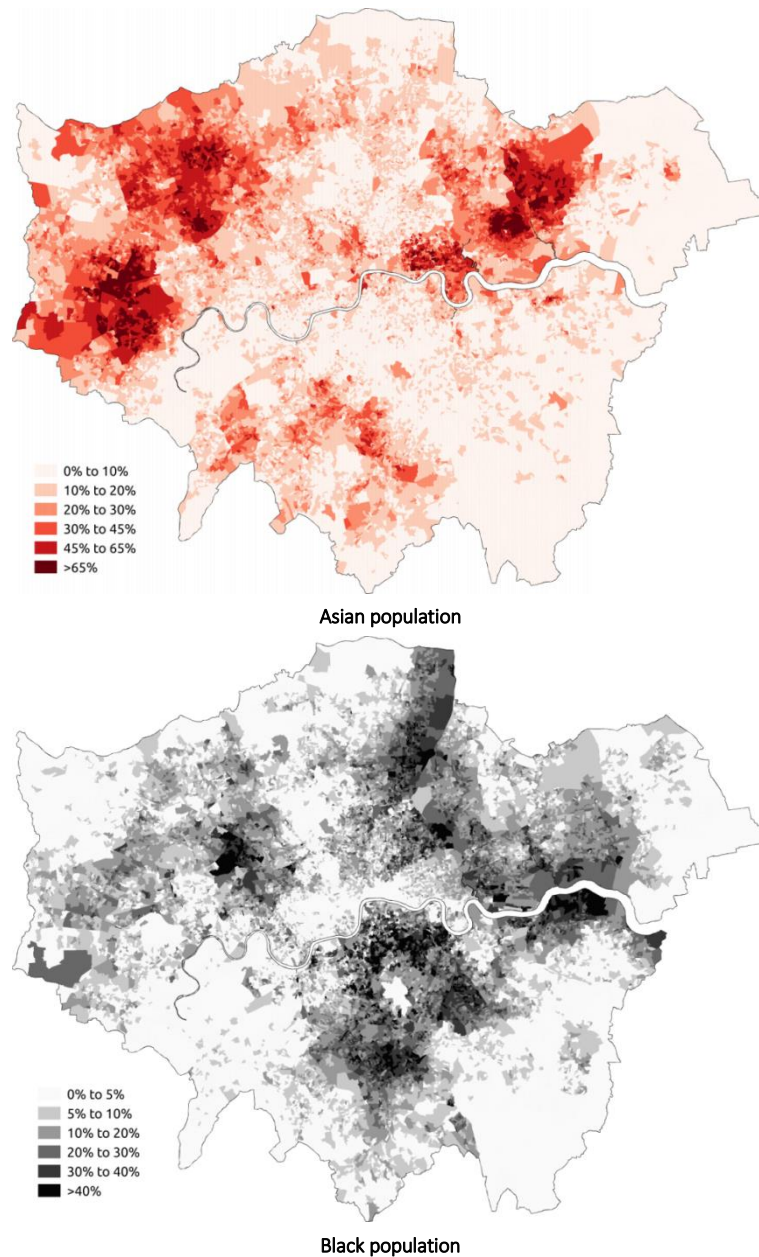
The notion of nation (*natio* in Latin) originally carried pejorative connotations. In the times of Ancient Rome, it denoted foreigners living in Rome, deprived of a status equal to native citizens. Such an understanding of the notion was close to the meaning of the Greek word *tá éthne* (Saryusz-Wolska, Traba 2014, s. 253). It was on the fringes of the Mediterranean Basin that the traditional spatial model of multinational cities developed, a model involving the harmonious combination of common public areas, where the exchange of services and goods took place, with a separate residential districts in one urban organism. The port, market square and main commercial streets constituted heterogeneous areas, where commercial exchange and the integration of inhabitants took place. Homogeneous residential space comprised designated districts, enclaves and ghettos, in which nationally and ethnically separate communities could enjoy autonomy on a scale unknown in European cities (Pappé 2014, s.142). Coherent, national-religious communities, the so-called diasporas: Jewish, Armenian and Greek, were among those communities which most strongly cultivated their distinctiveness.

This national-ethnic mixture formed the varied, colourful, almost kaleidoscopic landscape of a Middle East city. At the same, within each community existed secondary divisions, dependent on social status and wealth of its members. National communities had their own laws and customs, public order was maintained by local authorities, subordinate to imperial power. An English writer, Lawrence Durrell, in his tetralogy *“The Alexandria Quartet”* vividly described the heterogeneous nature of Cairo of the 1920s, where next to Egyptian burghers, known as *Misir* (Cairenes), lived Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and a large group of Europeans that had arrived there in colonial times. When the United Kingdom established a protectorate over Egypt, it adopted the old Ottoman rule “live and let live,” aimed at facilitating the process of running a multinational empire. This is probably the most adequate (and the shortest) of known definitions of tolerance.

The bustling, multinational cities of the Middle East survived until the first half of the 20th century, when they disappeared as a result of the eruption of national liberation movements. The centuries-old history of cosmopolitanism, or as we would say today – the multiculturalism of such cities as Cairo, Alexandria, Baghdad, Tunis, Damascus and Jaffa, came to an end along with the collapse of colonialism. The period of anti-colonialism and Zionism, particularly the war that accompanied the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, triggered an exchange of population in the Middle East on an unprecedented scale: more than 700 000 Arabs were expelled from Palestine, with the richest of them creating their own ethnic districts in the neighbouring cities of Palestine: Amman, Damascus and Beirut, while others have remained in

frontier refugee camps until today. In reprisal, Sephardic Jews were expelled from the Arab cities of the Middle East, the old Jewish districts being emptied of their inhabitants. Most of them ended up in Israel and settled mainly in the Development Towns, built hastily during the late 1940s and 1950s by the Israeli government. The Europeans left the Middle Eastern cities, followed by other national-ethnic minorities. With rapidly progressing modernisation, old, traditional professions vanished and street trade was restricted. Built-up areas of the cities were preserved, but their nature changed completely: Arabic became the common language, and public space was no longer dominated by foreigners (Pappé 2014, s.144).

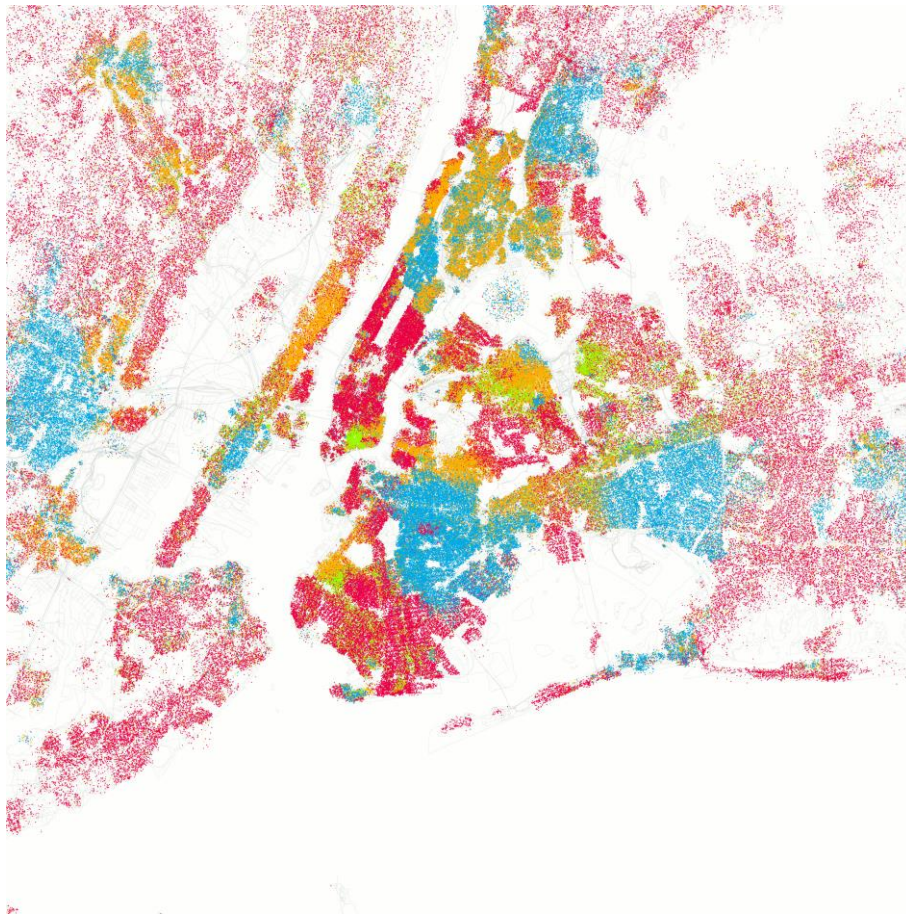
Figure 1. Dispersion of ethnic groups in London



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_London [Accessed 15 August 2015]

Multinational European cities, mainly former imperial capitals like London and Paris, have developed in quite a different manner. The twilight of the colonial era, which in oriental cities put an end to their multiethnicity and multiculturalism, brought these phenomena to Europe. At that time, the liberal model of a multicultural society began to develop in the West. Officials and clerks, soldiers and officers, as well as many residents of former colonies, thanks to the immigration laws given to them, flocked to the capital cities. In France they were mostly citizens of the Maghreb, while in Britain they were the subjects of the British queen (British Commonwealth): Indians, Pakistanis, Caribs, and Africans. They formed enclaves occupying mainly the southern and western suburbs of London. From then on, maps depicting the ethnic divisions of the inhabitants of this city resembled a complex patchwork of different cultures, and the annual colourful, multicultural carnival of local communities, organised in Notting Hill, became a source of pride for Londoners and a great tourist attraction. Another wave of immigration occurred in the 1960s, when the needs of the rapidly growing economies of Western Europe could not be met by the local labour markets, with several hundred thousand Gastarbeiter from Turkey moving to Germany. They formed uniform ethnic communities, residing in the working class districts of the largest industrial cities.

Figure 2. Dispersion of ethnic groups in New York



Legend: Each dot is 25 people. White Black Asian Hispanic Other

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_New_York_City, author: Eric Fisher [Accessed 15 August 2015]

Also, New York City, the famous American melting pot, a place of fusion for many nationalities, developed on the basis of the traditional model: downtown streets and quays were places of meetings and trade, yet the various groups of immigrants lived separately. Chinese and Italian “towns” were formed in Manhattan, Jews settled in Brooklyn, Poles took a liking to Greenpoint, while Harlem became the “black” district, dangerous and inaccessible to white people. Over time, the eastern part of Harlem and a large area of Bronx was settled by Spanish-speaking Latinos, and wealthy Americans usually lived near Central Park (Upper East End) and on Long Island. As much as 36% of the 8.5 million New Yorkers were born abroad. Among the white New Yorkers, the most numerous groups are those from Italian, Irish, German, Russian and Polish backgrounds, those people who came here during the wave of economic immigration in the 19th century. Currently, most immigrants arrive from the Dominican Republic, China, Jamaica, Guyana and Mexico. Statistical research carried out over the last twenty years has revealed two characteristic trends: traditionally “white” and “black” enclaves have been gradually dispersing and disintegrating, whereas the enclaves inhabited by people of Asian and Latino backgrounds have been widening territorially and becoming more homogeneous racially (The Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy 2010). Harlem and the industrial parts along the Hudson River bank belonging to Brooklyn and Queens have become attractive, subject to rapid and intense gentrification. Their multiethnic and multicultural character, appealing to the first gentrifiers: artists, the young and freelancers, has blurred: the second wave of gentrification, involving those neighbourhoods that had become fashionable, have seen the arrival of cosmopolitan, network services with expensive shops and restaurants, luxury apartment complexes and rising rental prices. Also, an exchange of population has taken place. The Polish colony in Greenpoint, under the pressure of gentrification, has dispersed, some of the immigrants of Polish background have moved to the nearby neighbourhood of Ridgewood, while most have assimilated to American suburbs. The American sociologist, Sharon Zukin, writes that due to this kind of changes a city loses its soul (Zukin 2010, p.1-31).

Mechanisms that integrate and separate urban space

It is a common phenomenon that immigrants, upon arrival in a new country, stick together to support each other and, through a sense of togetherness, they ease the shock related to cutting themselves off from their roots, while continuing to follow their customs and traditions. Ethnic enclaves of immigrants serve as a kind of incubator to reduce the shock caused by the change of place. However, despite the natural desire to live “among fellow members”, the best habitat for immigrants are large cosmopolitan cities: dynamic urban environments offer them chances of receiving education, learning the rules of life in another community and finding a job in accordance with their qualifications. A conscious integration policy should therefore be characterised by a balance between the desire to disperse and the desire to maintain a certain level of uniformity. *Admittedly, the ghetto makes it difficult to integrate, but too much dispersion leads to alienation* (Warzel 2015, pp. 24-27). Rural environments, deserted settlements, and temporary camps in particular are a trap for immigrants, a hellish place of isolation, where as a result of the lack of any occupation one can only lament the lost homeland. This phenomenon is known in the Middle East: for generations a multitude of Palestinians living in refugee camps have been cultivating the memory of their lost homes, holding the keys to doors that no longer

exist, and treasuring old documents and family heirlooms. Israel committed another mistake resettling Sephardic Jews from Africa and the Middle East in the Development Towns built on the outskirts. For many years they have lived in concrete houses in the wilderness, deprived of work, health service and future prospects. The error sparked off a wave of deep, multi-generational frustration and the ruling Israeli left-wing party was punished by depriving it of power several years later¹. Ashkenazic Jews from Europe, who usually had considerable financial resources or better social connections, moved into major Israeli cities, primarily the agglomeration of metropolitan Tel Aviv, learned to speak Hebrew much quicker and they sooner assimilated into the new nation of Israel.

Some national-religious communities (diaspora) foster their distinct culture and ethnic purity in a rigorous manner which, from their point of view, has important advantages. This can be confirmed by the case of Jews who survived in the diaspora as a separate community for two thousand years. Integration is a very desirable phenomenon from the point of view of the country to which immigrants are arriving. However, from the point of view of the country of their origin, it is desirable to maintain links with their homeland as long as possible, which not only ensures cultural and ethnic continuity but also ensures a substantial flow of material resources. Relatively small amounts of money regularly sent by immigrants to their countries of origin in total account for an annual sum of at least \$ 300 billion (Vertovec 2012, p. 9). Nonetheless, in the context of the currently widespread economic immigration, usually only the first generation is separated. Graduation from school, language proficiency and adaptation to the ways of life result in the melting of subsequent generations into the local communities, which can lead to integration or even complete assimilation in the hope for social and material advancement. A common path leading to assimilation is that of mixed marriages. This typically involves a change of place of residence: for assimilated people close proximity to the ethnic group from which they derive is no longer relevant, on the contrary – moving away from the ethnic ghetto can become a symbol of independence and success.

Among the factors affecting the spatial shape of multinational cities one should distinguish those of an external nature, especially the geopolitical ones, and those of an internal nature: connected with the local culture, traditions and topography. Undoubtedly, the strongest impulse that prompted the twilight of the historic model of multinationality arose from nationalist movements based on the modern concept of the nation-state. The separation of distinct ethnic groups are encouraged by all kinds of political movements of a national-religious nature, which, in their extreme, orthodox form, lead to the spread of xenophobic and racist attitudes. Once this level of intolerance is reached it is not difficult to move to the next one, that of pogroms and ethnic cleansing or, in extreme cases, wars. The modern history of Europe and of the whole world, with its examples of ethnic and religious conflicts, too numerous to mention here, provides a great deal of evidence that these threats are not unfounded.

The separation of clashing communities sometimes takes the form of a wall. In such a case, the role of the wall is not the traditional protection of the city, instead its role is to consolidate the division between its residents. In the 20th century, walls of separation were built in Belfast,

¹ It is believed that Mapai, a ruling party in Israel from 1948, lost power due to Sephardic Jews – see: Z. Efrat, *Politics of New Towns in Israel*, [in:] R. Brand, O. Scialom, *Urb-Urb. Patterns of Contemporary Living*, Sternthal Books, Venice 2014, p. 48.

Nicosia, and Palestine. Other, much more common barriers dissecting the cities into separate enclaves are immaterial; a conventional, mental but impassable boundary can be marked by a river, an edge of the street or railroad tracks. There are other invisible lines related to the labour market, place of residence, choice of school or university that separate national, ethnic or religious groups. These internal boundaries are invisible to visitors, especially pilgrims or tourists, who can freely cross them. However, for the locals they remain as hard as a wall.

The issue of fencing does not only concern those communities with distinct national, ethnic or religious roots; it is very characteristic of modern housing development in all parts of the world. It seems that people, and especially the richest ones, want to live among their peers, because they feel safer when they are walled off. The evaluation of this phenomenon is diverse; in Europe, it is usually negative, whereas in the United States, spatial separation related to status and race is perceived as something positive(!). Currently, studies into the spatial determinants of social tensions and conflicts are being carried out in the diverse urban environment of Los Angeles – referred to as a heteropolis by Charles Jencks, a metropolis regarded by some people as the archetype of a multilingual, polycentric and multicultural city and as the model of the city of the future by others. Spatial separation of the city is seen by Los Angeles scholars as an element that stabilizes and reduces tension between potentially antagonised social and ethnic groups (Szczepański, Kozielska 2008, p.148).

The contemporary multinational city

In the postmodern city, virtual space has increasingly becoming a platform of exchange: numerous economic, social and cultural functions are performed through the media and ubiquitous electronic communications. Public space, symbolic for the European concept of the city, is losing many of its previous functions in favour of the Internet. Sławomir Gzell believes that with no doubt *the information highway is the street of tomorrow, and a teleport is an future agora* (Gzell 2010, p.17). In his book, *Network Society*, Manuel Castells describes the *Informational City*, defining it not as a form but as a process characterised by the *structural domination of the space of flows* (Castells 2007, p. 401). In this concept, space represents an expression of society while social relations give this space specific forms, functions and meanings. The physical places do not disappear, but their current functions are taken over by the networks. He sees the spatial form of the new economy as *globally connected and locally disconnected megacities, discontinuous constellations of spatial fragments, functional pieces and segments of society* (Castells 2007, p. 433). Members of the elite belong to a circle of international culture whose identity is not connected with any particular place. Castells argues that the global merger of elites and the segmentation and disorganization of the masses constitute mechanisms characteristic of contemporary social transformation. Global integration is assuming the form of a network, while local separation that of walls.

Researchers investigating contemporary times emphasise that technological progress has changed the way in which space-time is understood and experienced: time has accelerated and distances have become shorter. This fact has a significant bearing on the spatial model of the modern polycentric, multicultural city, as well as on the functioning of its inhabitants. The development of electronic communication allows for ever increasing separation between the fulfilment of everyday activities and spatial proximity. The traditional, coherent city is being

gradually deprived of its functional necessity, and thereby – *de facto* – of its *raison d'être*. The postmodern city is becoming a ragged and discontinuous formation. It resembles more an archipelago than an island, a constellation rather than a star. Inside each collection there are never-ending processes of unification and segmentation underway, accompanied by an ever increasing blend of people and the loss of traditional, coherent ethnic districts².

This massive migration, the development of global electronic media and transnational social networks *limit territorial sovereignty and monolithic order* – in other words, they affect the main components of a national state (Vertovec 2012, p. 95). The more open state borders and blurred boundaries of the cities are no longer perceived as the boundaries of political, national or municipal communities. What is more, physical proximity is no longer a necessary condition for an individual to function within a given community. Cheap mobile phones have dramatically changed the way in which migrants understand the space. Distance is no longer problematic, and even in a foreign country they can effectively maintain social contacts and family ties by frequent calls. The Internet, satellite television, electronic media, the ability to quickly – and ever more cheaply – travel by plane mean that migrants do not have to renounce their original identity while living outside their home country. Nor do they have to live together, in a group, in order to maintain a sense of belonging to a community. They can remain spiritually immersed in their culture, while being present in body in another country, and they can assume temporary and changeable identities. This results in an increasing dispersion of ethnic minorities in a city, immigrants do not settle in a group, but in the places that are economically available to them.

Figure 3. Street of the multinational city, Oxford Street, London, 2010



Source: phot. author

² The phenomenon in question involves for example Neukölln, a borough with its large Turkish community, currently subject to "youth" gentrification. cf. D. Groyecka, *Gentryfikacja Berlina. Od życia na podłuchu do kultury caffè latte*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra, Gdańsk 2014.

Social sciences that currently devote close attention to the phenomenon of migration, define transcultural skills acquired by migrants as “cultural competence” or “cosmopolitanism”: capabilities characteristic of *individuals who are familiar with other cultures, and who are able to freely move between these cultures* (Vertovec 2012, p. 77). These traits are being compared to other personal competencies: analytical, emotional and creative. The group of people with the highest level of cultural competence include the elites of global corporations, artists – cosmopolitans and globetrotters, who have mastered the ability to function in other societies. The way in which migrants have adapted to life among new environments has been a frequent area of research. This process, depending on its effects, has been called integration or assimilation. Integration involves the acceptance by foreigners of rules of life existing within the community, while maintaining their own identity, resulting in cultural exchange. Assimilation involves the change of own identity, where an immigrant melts into the national mass of the country into which (s)he has arrived. In the light of these observations, today's transnational activity of migrants and the strength of their relations with their countries of origin is considered to be an unprecedented phenomenon. The transnationality of migrants does not clash with their integration into the new environment, many immigrants constantly cross borders and negotiate their identity, dosing their commitment to the “old” and the “new” country. Factors which hinder the process of integration, such as discrimination, xenophobia or racism, strengthen the migrants' transnational attitudes, which then escalate due to the easy access to radical ideologies spread either directly (temples, mosques), or, equally effectively, via the Internet and electronic media (Vertovec 2012, p. 89). Perhaps this process explains the hatred with which some young Europeans, belonging to the second or third generation of immigrant families, treat their adoptive homeland.

Multiculturalism and multiethnicity themselves do not have to be conflictogenic. However, many commentators highlight the cultural differences, seeing them as a manifestation of Huntington's concept of the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington 2006). The conflict between Muslim immigrants and the society of the West comes to the fore here. For nearly fifty years the idea of multiculturalism prevailed in the Western society, the principles of tolerance, equality and acceptance of difference applied, which were the foundations of public order and harmony. These principles were crucial for the coexistence of people from different countries, of different races, cultures or religions. This tolerant attitude changed after the terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Centre. After this event, the Italian journalist, Oriana Fallaci, wrote an article, published in the “Corriere della Sierra” and repeatedly reprinted, entitled *The Rage and the Pride* – a text full of xenophobia, calling for a break with the idea of political correctness, negating the principles of multiculturalism, asking provocative questions about the limits of tolerance, expressing the lack of consent to these representatives of other religions and cultures, who do not want to accept the legal and social order established in the countries to which they immigrated.

The clash of people from different cultures takes many forms, sometimes becoming a fertile ground for the growth of the prosperity of the city, sometimes, though, a seedbed for a conflict. Ryszard Kapuściński in a multicultural society saw opportunities for development, also for Poland. He appealed for the opening up to immigrants from Asia and Africa during an open

lecture delivered in 2002 at the Jagiellonian University³. He perceived multiculturalism as a source of strength and vitality essential for an aging Europe in order to face the challenges of the new economies in the Far East. In his book titled "The Other", Kapuściński often quoted Herodotus, who saw a mirror in a stranger, one in which you can look at yourself, who believed that the empathy for a stranger leads to greater self-knowledge (Kapuściński 2009, p. 19). However, in order for cooperation and integration to take place, a platform for dialogue, mutual acceptance and openness to other traditions are needed. The lack of these elements leads to frustration and anger, which can turn into conflict, similar to that witnessed periodically on the streets of Paris and London, a phenomenon that Bohdan Jałowiecki called "multiculturalism with Molotov cocktails in the background" (Jałowiecki 2007, p. 43). Many of today's vibrant and colourful, multicultural cities have poor areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, habitats of poverty and crime. Tourists give these places wide breath due to the harassing behaviours, vandalism, and aggression aimed at strangers which are commonplace there. Social exclusion, unemployment and the lack of prospects in life degenerate immigrant environments and promotes the formation of criminal structures; that is how high-risk neighbourhoods are created, sometimes the smallest excuse evoking an emotional outburst, demonstrations, riots and street fighting.

The recognition of certain common rules for all inhabitants is essential for a multinational city to function as an orderly place. Jerzy Sarnecki, a polish-born professor of criminology from Sweden, claims: *Cultural differences undoubtedly exist, but with well-functioning integration they quickly disappear. Conversely, when these alien groups are isolated from the rest of society, subcultures are formed – especially among young men – that are hostile to society and its norms. Our research has shown that social disorganisation and isolation are greater causes of crime than cultural differences*⁴. Western countries know cases where immigrants and their children achieve glittering careers in politics, economics and culture. Nevertheless, some ethnic communities integrate with considerable difficulty. Pauperisation and unemployment affect them particularly often. In a city structure, social inequalities often acquire an ethnic-spatial dimension: the downtown and rich suburban residential areas are inhabited by an indigenous privileged strata; and the poor that have arrived from other countries live in neglected blocks of flats. These two classes live independently from each another; in one town, but in separate worlds. What divides them is a cultural and economic gap, which takes on a particular space-time dimension: the rich have the means to move quickly and transmit information instantly. Space is no longer a barrier for them. In the same city stay immigrants and refugees from Third World countries, who live in the past and who do not even have names for modern inventions in their own languages. For them, time stands still, and the space closes them like a trap of place. The status and social position of contemporary people is not reflected in their nationality, religion or place of birth, but in the ease of communication and the freedom of choice of workplace and residence, their social and spatial mobility.

³ An open lecture delivered by R. Kapuściński at the Jagiellonian University, 17 January 2002.

⁴ An interview with prof. J. Sarnecki, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26-27 September 2015, p. 17.

The case of the multinational city seen from the Polish perspective

One might want to take a closer look at the evolution of the spatial model of multinational cities from Poland, a country which has been very uniform in terms of ethnicity for several last decades⁵. However, it is important to note that even ethnically uniform countries can be culturally diverse. Bohdan Jałowiecki writes that the phenomenon of cultural splitting also concerns Poland, which will have to face the multiculturalism of a society divided into modern citizens: the inhabitants of large cities, living in the 21st century, using technology, seizing chances and opportunities offered by modernisation, and the inhabitants of the provinces, socially and mentally embedded in the 20th, sometimes in the 19th century. Large Polish cities have entered a phase of metropolisation that previously took place in Western Europe. The cultural distance that separates their residences from the rest of the country often prevents discussion and agreement. This is evidenced by, among other things, the period of parliamentary elections when voting preferences draw clear territorial patterns, indicating the distinct division of Poland along the Vistula River, and, above all, the insular nature of Polish cities. Young, well-educated Poles displaying entrepreneurial skills cross the spatial boundaries and function better in a united Europe. At the same time, a large part of society is not ready to meet the challenges of modernisation and their mindsets do not quite agree with the canon of European values such as tolerance, individual freedom, respect towards religious and ethnic minorities, and state neutrality vis-à-vis religion. This fact is exemplified by violent protests sparked off by the decision to accept some refugees from Syria engulfed by civil war. Whether we want it or not, increasing numbers of people of different nationality, skin colour, culture and religion will be coming to Poland: immigrants and refugees with whom we will be sharing our workplaces and public spaces. It will depend on us whether these people will take a liking to us and enrich our lives and culture, or whether they will learn to hate us.

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⁵ Nearly 95% of the citizens of Poland declare a homogeneous Polish national identity. The most numerous minorities are Silesians and Germans. Source: M. Barwiński, *Struktura narodowościowa Polski w świetle wyników spisu powszechnego z 2011 roku*, Przegląd Geograficzny 2014/86/2, p. 225.

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